EXPLORING MEANINGFULNESS OF LIFE AMONG SURVIVORS OF SEX TRAFFICKING IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Sex trafficking is a form of human trafficking which is considered a contemporary form of slavery that is made up of victims, buyers, and traffickers. Sex trafficking is a billion dollars industry. It generates more profit than any other industry in the world, illicit or otherwise. The present study aimed to explore the meaningfulness of life among survivors of sex trafficking. It is a two-phase research design where the researcher has collected quantitative data first, and the qualitative data was collected during the second phase. The quantitative phase of this study comprises data from 126 subjects. They were divided into two groups. In group 1, survivors were rescued within two years (N=63), and in group 2, survivors post two years after the rescue (N=63). Group 1 (M=15.58) scored lower on the current meaning of life compared to group 2 (M=23.15). Group 1 (M=16.80) is less satisfied with life compared to group 2 (M=22.65). Group 1 (M=61.09) has a lower quality of life compared to group (M=77.49). There was a moderate positive correlation between the current meaning in life and satisfaction with life, r=.42, n=126, p<.001. There was a negative moderate correlation between the current meaning in life and negative emotions r= -49 n=126, p<.001, and there was a strong positive correlation between the current meaning in life and positive emotions, r=.53, n=126, p<.001. There was a strong positive correlation between the current meaning in life and quality of life, r=.64, n=126, p<.001. Results from the qualitative phase show that survivors' life in slavery was meaningless and marked by torture and rape. Meaningfulness of life for participants depends on a new identity, acceptance, education, spirituality, and respect. Those who have children found meaningfulness in life in motherhood. Majority of participants reported not being fully satisfied with their life. Food and shelter over their

heads, good health, and fulfillment of their dreams/goals would increase their satisfaction with life. Participants reported having more negative emotions than positive emotions. Participants had physical and psychological complaints, the environment was unsafe for them, and they have a limited social life because of distrust of people and lack of acceptance.
Key Words: sex trafficking, meaningfulness of life, survivor, trauma

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

APA	American Psychology Association
CMIL	Current meaning in life
M	Mean
MLQ	Meaning of life questionnaire
N	Number
NE	Negative emotions
p	p-value
PE	Positive emotions
PANE	Positive and negative emotions
PTSD	Post-traumatic stress disorder
PTG	Post-traumatic growth
QOL	Quality of life
r	Pearson correlation
SD	Standard deviation
SPANE	Scale of positive and negative experience
SWL	Satisfaction with life
SWLS	Satisfaction with life scale
WHOQOL-BREF	World Health Organization quality of life bref
WHO	World Health Organization

Chapter 1

Introduction

Sex trafficking is a subdivision of human trafficking which is considered a contemporary form of slavery that is made up of victims (supply), buyers (demand), and traffickers (distributors) (Williamson et al., 2012). It affects both genders, but research has proved that females are disproportionately represented among survivors indicating that sex trafficking affects more women and girls than men (UNODC, 2000).

The sex trafficking industry in India generates a billion-dollar a year (Gupta, 2012). The number of girls and women that are trafficked in the country is unknown, but the estimation is that it may include 27 million females ("For India's sex trafficking victims, family members often bear part of the blame," 2017). According to Hughes et al. (1999), the estimation is that every day 200 women and girls enter the sex industry in the country, and approximately 80 percent of them are forced to do so.

Poverty is found to be the most significant factor that contributes to females' vulnerability to sex trafficking (Ray, 2015; Rajan, 2013; Deane, 2010; Dalla & Kreimer, 2016). Traffickers lure women and girls with false promises of employment in the big cities (Matusek, 2016; Ray, 2015). The caste system makes the problem worse because the underprivileged parts of society are unprotected, and traffickers target vulnerable communities ("Sex Trafficking in India," 2013; Kill & Pradhan, 2013).

Theoretical Framework

The first theory is Existentialism, a philosophy that emphasizes individual existence, choice, and freedom. Human beings determine their meaning in life (Crowell, 2015). The second is the Flourish theory by Seligman (2013), which states that individuals can move beyond being just fine in life if they only thrive for happiness, creating meaning and well-being for themselves and others. The third is the Trauma theory which emerged in the 1960s from areas related to social concerns such as the presence of violence against children and women (battering, rape, incest), the identification of PTSD in war veterans, and the awareness of psychic trauma inflicted by genocide and torture, mainly because of the Holocaust (Mambrol, 2017).

These three theories mentioned above are significant for this study because Existentialism and Flourish theory are connected to the meaningfulness of life, and

trauma has detrimental consequences that prevent an individual from living a physically and psychologically healthy life.

Rationale/Significance of the Study

There is a great need for research on this topic to enhance understanding of the best ways to protect, serve, and support survivors of sex trafficking while they search for justice.

In the current study, the researcher has compared the meaningfulness of life, satisfaction with life, positive and negative emotions, and quality of life among the two groups. Group one includes women rescued within two years, while group two, includes women post two years after the rescue. The psychological problems, which include but are not limited to, anxiety, fear, and self-esteem problems persist for up to18 months or even longer (Koss et al., 2003). Moreover, survivors of sexual abuse prior to two years after the incident were found to have a higher depression level and lower self-esteem compared with women who had experienced sexual trauma for more than two years after the traumatic event (Kucharska, 2017; Koss et al., 2003).

Aim

The present study aimed to explore the meaningfulness of life among survivors of sex trafficking in India.

Statement of the Problem and Research Questions

Sex trafficking is a serious human rights violation, and therefore, studying this topic is of great importance to assess the best practices to treat survivors of sex trafficking as well as to educate society about the tactics and identity of traffickers to reduce sex trafficking in the country. Furthermore, it is important to give survivors a voice to share their experiences as the healing process starts when non-judgmental people listen to their plight with empathy (Litam, 2017).

1. How do survivors make meaning of their lives?
2. How are survivors satisfied with life?
3. Are positive or negative emotions predominant in survivors?
4. How is the quality of life of survivor post-rescue?

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

Schmidt et al. (2022) stated that survivors of sex trafficking are trauma survivors and PTSD is common among this population. Sex trafficking has a long-lasting effect on survivors' psychological health (Levine, 2017) and well-being (Mumey et al., 2021) because they were devoid of their fundamental human rights such as to have a safe, secure, and dignified life, and they lost autonomy over their own bodies, the right to make their choices in life, and right to earn a respected and healthy living (Rijal et al., 2016).

Matusek (2016) affirms that the socio-economic factors function as a kind of violence against women because, in general, women in India struggle with a lack of education and, consequently, a lack of job opportunities. Knowing the socio-economic inequality factor, traffickers persuade women with job offers that are tempting to them that are struggling with poverty. Furthermore, youth living on the streets or in shelters are at risk of sex trafficking (Franchino-Olsen et al., 2020). Most of the victims that are trafficked are women and girls and they are trafficked for sexual exploitation (United Nations, 2019).

In Dalla and Kreimer's (2016) study, which was done in India, majority of the participants were from rural areas and were living in poverty. Most of them reported being married as minors (arranged married) before sex trafficking. Some of them were coerced or tricked into trafficking, while others were deceived by acquaintances that offered job opportunities in the city.

Ray (2015) studied the vulnerability of women in Assam, India, and found that poverty was the main factor that contributed to their vulnerability to sex trafficking. The lack of adequate income compelled girls and women into sex trafficking. Usually, girls go away to search for employment and end up being sex trafficked.

Meaningfulness of life

Grad and Zeligman (2017) studied the role of meaning in life and social interest as predictor factors of post-traumatic growth in college students who have suffered traumatic events in their lives and found that social interest is undoubtedly related to the presence of meaning in life and meaning in life is a strong predictor of post-traumatic

growth. Survivors may find life more meaningful after trafficking when they show evidence of post-traumatic growth (Evans, 2019). Post-traumatic growth influences well-being positively, and it may increase a sense of purpose and meaning in life (Triplett et al., 2012).

Satisfaction with life

Beuerlein (2014) studied hopefulness, life satisfaction, and trauma severity in 45 women rescued from sex trafficking in the USA, and the findings show that greater trauma severity, decreases satisfaction with life.

Quality of life

A research study revealed that there was a positive correlation between post-traumatic growth and quality of life (Perry, 2015). Therefore, survivors of sex trafficking can lead a life with quality when behavior changes positively (Perry, 2015).

Positive and negative emotions

Emotions can be positive or negative. Positive ones are emotions such as joy, cheerfulness, happiness, and contentment (Baumgardner & Crothers, p.39, 2010). Negative emotions are emotions such as sadness, fear, guilt, disgust, anger, and contempt (Baumgardner & Crothers, p.39, 2019). Survivors of sex trafficking reported having more negative emotions than positive emotions (Scarsella, 2017).

Specific objectives of the quantitative phase

1. To explore the meaningfulness of life among survivors
2. To explore satisfaction with life among survivors
3. To explore the positive and negative emotions among survivors
4. To explore the quality of life among survivors

Specific objectives of the qualitative Phase

1. To understand the meaningfulness of life among survivors
2. To understand satisfaction with life among survivors
3. To understand the positive and negative emotions among survivors
4. To understand the quality of life among survivors

Chapter 3

Method

Research Design

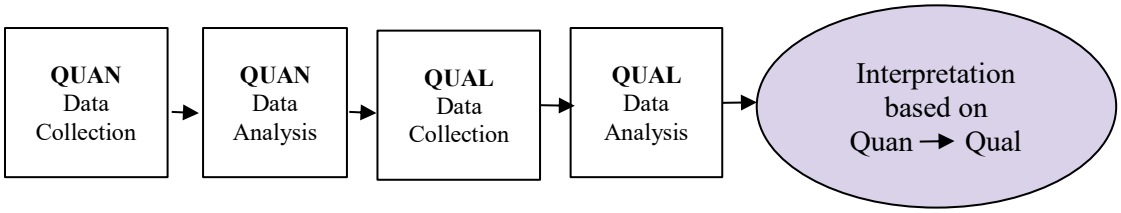
Mixed methods refer to research that combines both quantitative and qualitative methods. In this approach, the researcher is not confined to one approach in terms of collecting and analyzing the data (Creswell, 2009).

Sequential Explanatory Design

It is a two-phase research design where the researcher collects and analyzes quantitative data first, and then gathers and analyzes qualitative data in the second phase that adds to the results of the early quantitative results (Creswell, 2009).

Figure 1

Diagram Showing the Explanatory Research Design (Creswell, 2009)



I. Quantitative Phase

Variables

The independent variable of this study is the time since the rescue (survivors rescued within two years and survivors post two years after the rescue).

The dependent variables of this study are the current meaning in life, satisfaction with life, positive emotions, negative emotions, and quality of life.

Hypotheses

1. There is a significant difference in the current meaning in life (CMIL) of survivors rescued within two years and survivors post two years after the rescue.
2. There is a significant difference in satisfaction with life (SWL) of survivors rescued within two years and survivors post two years after the rescue.
3. There is a significant difference in positive and negative emotions (PANE) of survivors rescued within two years and survivors post two years after the rescue.
4. There is a significant difference in the quality of life (QOL) of survivors rescued within two years and survivors post two years after the rescue.

5. There is a correlation between the current meaning in life (CMIL) and satisfaction with life (SWL) among survivors.
6. There is a correlation between the current meaning in life (CMIL) and positive and negative emotions (PANE) among survivors.
7. There is a correlation between the current meaning in life (CMIL) and quality of life (QOL) among survivors.

Data Collection Process

The purposive sampling technique was used to select 126 survivors. The researcher made a telephone call to directors of aftercare homes that house rescued women, briefed the purpose of the study, and asked permission to collect data from survivors. Firstly, the researcher explained the purpose of the study to each survivor individually, and in some places, the purpose of the study was explained in a group. Secondly, the researcher gave copies of the meaning in life questionnaire (MLQ), satisfaction with life scale (SWLS), the scale of positive and negative emotions (SPANE), and quality of life (WHOQOL-BREF) after explaining all the questionnaires one by one to each of the survivors who have taken part in this study. For those who had an internet facility, the link to the Google form was sent to them. The questionnaires were administered in English and Hindi.

I. Qualitative Phase

Participants for this phase were 20 survivors. Ten participants who had the highest scores in the meaning in life questionnaire (MLQ), satisfaction with life (SWLS), the scale of positive and negative experiences (SPANE), and quality of life questionnaire (WHOQOL-BREF) combined were selected for semi-structured interviews, and 10 participants that had the lowest scores in the MLQ, SWLS, SPANE, and WHOQOL-BREF combined were also selected for semi-structured interviews. From group 1, two participants had high scores, and eight participants had low scores. From group 2, eight participants had high scores and two participants had low scores.

Data Collection Process

First, the researcher made a telephone call to NGOs that work with survivors of sex trafficking explaining the purpose of the study and asked permission to collect data from the residents and also from survivors that were already reintegrated into society and

visited the NGO regularly for counseling and guidance after the reintegration into society.

Semi-Structured Interview

The interviews were done individually in a room with the door closed. Rapport was first established so participants felt comfortable with the researcher. The consent form was explained to each participant. All the participants were able to communicate in English as a second language. Interviews were done between January 2022 and April 2022.

Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis was used in this study to analyze interviews verbatim to gain an in-depth insight into survivors' views about the meaningfulness of life, satisfaction with life, predominant emotions (positive and negative), and quality of life.

The researcher followed the steps of conducting thematic analysis according to Braun and Clarke (2006), (1) got familiar with the stories of the participants (data), (2) created initial codes, (3) searched themes, (4) reviewed themes, (5) defined themes and (6) wrote the final report.

Ethical Consideration

Participation was voluntary. The researcher got the Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval from Christ (Deemed to be University). Survivors were informed about the purpose of the study, and they were asked to give their signatures on the consent form. Confidentiality was explained before conducting the interviews. Participants were informed that this study did not involve any psychological or physical harm. The researcher followed the ‘Ten Guiding Principles' from WHO for interviewing sex trafficking survivors, which are, to understand your subject and cause no harm, only make promises if you can fulfill them, and evaluate the risks. Assure confidentiality and anonymity, get consent from the subject, listen to and respect each woman's evaluation of her situation and risks to her safety, do not re-traumatize a woman, be ready for any emergency intervention, and put the information gathered to good use (Zimmerman & Watts, 2003).

Chapter 4

Results and Discussion

The present study aimed to explore the meaningfulness of life among survivors of sex trafficking in India.

I. Quantitative Phase

This phase of the study comprises data from 126 survivors from different NGOs in Maharashtra and Karnataka. Participants were originally from different states in India, which are Maharashtra, Nagaland, Karnataka, Uttarakhand, and Tamil Nadu. Data collection started in 2019 and ended in March 2022. The age spanned from 18 to 38 years (M=19.5), time after the rescue spanned from a few months to 14 years (M=3.61). An independent sample t-test was used to determine if there were significant differences in the current meaning in life (CMIL), satisfaction with life (SWL), positive emotions (PE) and negative emotions (NE), and quality of life (QOL) between the two groups of survivors. In group 1, survivors were rescued within two years (N=63), and in group 2, survivors post two years after the rescue (N=63). This study also used the Pearson's Correlation Coefficient to measure the degree of relationship/association between the variables (1) current meaning in life (CMIL) with satisfaction with life (SWL), (2) current meaning in life (CMIL) with positive emotions (PE), and negative emotions (NE), (3) current meaning in life (CMIL) with quality of life (QOL).

Analysis and Findings

A normality test was conducted first to check the data. The results of the Shapiro-Wilk test presented in Table 1 show that for CMIL, the p-value is .09 for group 1 and .08 for group 2, for SWL the p-value is .06 for group 1 and .13 for group 2, for PE the p-value is .37 for group 1 and .07 for group 2, for NE the p-value is .20 for group 1 and .44 for group 2, for QOL the p-value is .63 for group 1 and .82 for group 2. Data was found to be normally distributed because the p-value for all the variables is greater than .05. The results of the Shapiro-Wilk test are presented in table 1.

Table 1

Results of the Normality Test (Shapiro-Wilk) for CMIL, SWL, PE, NE, and QOL

Variables	Group	Statistic	df	Sig.
CMIL	1	.967	63	.09
	2	.967	63	.08
SWL	1	.963	63	.06
	2	.970	63	.13
PE	1	.980	63	.37
	2	.965	63	.07
NE	1	.974	63	.20
	2	.981	63	.44
QOL	1	.985	63	.63
	2	.989	63	.82

Results presented in table 1 indicate that the data is normally distributed because the p-value for all the variables is greater than .05.

Independent Sample T-test Analysis

Hypothesis 1

There is a significant difference in the current meaning in life (CMIL) of survivors of sex trafficking rescued within two years and survivors post two years after the rescue.

Table 2

Independent Sample T-test Comparing CMIL between Group 1 (survivors rescued within two years) and Group 2 (survivors post two years after the rescue)

Variable	Group	N	Mean	SD	t	Sig.
CMIL	1	63	15.58	5.83	-8.02	.00
	2	63	23.15	4.69		

Results presented in table 2 indicate that there is a significant difference in the current meaning of life (CMIL) between the two groups. Hence hypothesis 1 is accepted. This finding agrees with Evans (2019) who states that survivors may find life more

meaningful after trafficking when they show evidence of post-traumatic growth, which is enhanced by positive and healthy relationships.

Hypothesis 2

There is a significant difference in satisfaction with life (SWL) of survivors of sex trafficking rescued within two years and survivors post two years after the rescue.

Table 3

Independent Sample T-test Comparing SWL between Group 1 and Group 2

Variable	Group	N	Mean	SD	t	Sig.
SWL	1	63	16.8	2.7	-7.96	.004
	2	63	22.65	5.1		

Results presented in table 3 indicate that there is a significant difference in satisfaction with life between the two groups. Survivors rescued within two years are less satisfied with life compared to survivors post two years after the rescue. Therefore hypothesis 2 is accepted. This finding is aligned with previous research that shows that survivors who have severe trauma are less satisfied with life (Beuerlein, 2014).

Hypothesis 3

There is a significant difference in positive emotions and negative emotions between survivors rescued within two years and survivors post two years after the rescue.

Table 4

Independent Sample T-test Comparing Positive Emotions (PE) and Negative Emotions (NE) between Group 1 and Group 2

Variables	Group	N	Mean	SD	t	Sig.
PE	1	63	15.78	4.42	-6.37	.000
	2	63	20.41	3.51		
NE	1	63	20.52	4.16	5.00	.002
	2	63	17.00	3.73		

Results presented in table 4 indicate that group 1 tends to have lesser positive emotions and more negative emotions compared to group 2. Therefore, hypothesis 3 is accepted. This finding is aligned with a study by Scarsella (2017) which revealed that

survivors of sex trafficking scored lower on positive emotions and higher on negative emotions compared to college students. However, survivors get better with time.

Hypothesis 4

There is a significant difference in the quality of life (QOL) of survivors of sex trafficking rescued within two years and survivors post two years after the rescue.

Table 5

Independent Sample T-test Comparing QOL between Group 1 and Group 2

Variable	Group	N	Mean	SD	t	Sig.
QOL	1	63	61.09	9.71	-9.69	0.004
	2	63	77.49	9.25		

Results presented in table 5 indicate that group 1 has a lower quality of life compared to group 2. Therefore hypothesis 4 is accepted. There is a positive correlation between PTG and QOL, which suggested that survivors have attained PTG and QOL even after enduring sexual exploitation in the sex industry (Perry & Pecanha, 2017).

Pearson's Correlation Analysis

Hypothesis 5

There is a correlation between the current meaning in life (CMIL) and satisfaction with life (SWL) among survivors of sex trafficking.

Table 6

Correlations between CMIL and SWL

Variables		CMIL	SWL
CMIL	Pearson Correlation	1	.422**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	126	126
SWL	Pearson Correlation	.422**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	126	126

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level 2-tailed).

Results shown in table 6 indicate that there was a moderate, positive correlation between CMIL and SWL, $r=.42$, $n=126$, $p<.001$. Hence, hypothesis 5 is accepted.

Previous research reported that post-traumatic growth influences well-being positively, and it may increase a sense of purpose and meaning in life (Triplett et al., 2012).

Hypothesis 6

There is a correlation between current meaning in life (CMIL) and positive emotions (PE) and negative emotions (NE) among survivors of sex trafficking.

Table 7

Correlations between CMIL and PE and CMIL and NE

	CMIL	PE	CMIL	NE
Pearson Correlation	1	.536**	1	.-492**
Sig. (2-tailed)		000		000
N	126	126	126	126

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level 2-tailed).

Results shown in table 7 indicate that there was a strong, positive correlation between CMIL and PE, r=.53, n=126, p<.001, and there was a negative, moderate correlation between CMIL and NE r= -49 n=126, p<.001. Hence, hypothesis 6 is accepted. Survivors of sex trafficking scored lower on positive emotions and higher on negative emotions compared to college students (Scarsella, 2017).

Hypothesis 7

There is a correlation between the current meaning in life (CMIL) and quality of life (QOL) among survivors of sex trafficking.

Table 8

Correlations between CMIL and QOL

Variables		CMIL	QOL
CMIL	Pearson Correlation	1	.649**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	126	126
QOL	Pearson Correlation	.649**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	126	126

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level 2-tailed).

Results shown in table 9 indicate that there was a strong, positive correlation between CMIL and QOL, r=.64, n=126, p<.001. Hence, hypothesis 7 is accepted. According to Perry (2015), there is a significant relationship between post-traumatic growth and quality of life.

II. Qualitative Phase

Thematic analysis was used to analyze verbatim from 20 survivors.

Table 9

Demographics of Participants

Participant Code	Age	States	Education	Years in trafficking	Group	Test scores
ID5	22	Karnataka	4th	3	1	Low
ID18	23	Maharashtra	10th	5	1	High
ID25	24	Orissa	college-going	9	1	Low
ID29	19	Karnataka	8th	3	1	Low
ID48	24	Maharashtra	8th	5	1	High
ID59	19	Karnataka	10th	2	1	Low
ID84	24	Karnataka	10th	5	1	Low
ID85	28	Maharashtra	college-going	4	1	Low
ID101	28	Nagaland	Diploma	6	1	Low
ID106	25	Karnataka	10th	3	1	Low
ID7	24	Maharashtra	4th	5	2	Low
ID42	38	Maharashtra	Literate	14	2	High
ID46	24	Maharashtra	10th	5	2	High
ID49	24	Maharashtra	10th	5	2	High
ID60	20	Karnataka	Diploma	5	2	Low
ID82	19	Karnataka	10th	3	2	High
ID91	19	Karnataka	6th	1	2	High
ID112	20	Karnataka	10th	2	2	High
ID113	21	Karnataka	10th	3	2	High
ID120	20	Nagaland	Diploma	2	2	High

Analysis and Findings

This phase comprises data from 20 participants who were originally from different states in India. One was from Orissa, two were from Nagaland, seven were from Maharashtra, and 10 were from the state of Karnataka. The researcher collected data from different NGOs in the states of Maharashtra and Karnataka. The education level of the participants varies from literate (not school educated but able to read) to college-going at the time of the interviews. The duration of time in trafficking varies from one to 14 years.

Independent of the time spent in sex trafficking, it was a traumatic experience for survivors.

Table 10

Objective 1: To understand the Meaningfulness of Life among Survivors

Global Theme	Organizing Theme	Basic themes
1. Views of life	1.1. The emptiness of life	1.1.1. Torture 1.1.2. Rape 1.1.3. Rejection
	1.2. A life worth living	1.2.1. New identity 1.2.2. Children 1.2.3. Education 1.2.4. Acceptance 1.2.5. Respect 1.2.6. Spirituality

For survivors, life in slavery was meaningless and marked by torture and rape, findings which are supported by Ray (2015). The feeling of rejection troubles them even after the rescue, and it is supported by Simkhada (2008). The meaningfulness of life depends on a new identity. Those who have children found the meaningfulness of life in motherhood, education, acceptance, respect, and spirituality. These themes as important factors for the meaningfulness of life are emerging research findings, which were not present in the a priori. Almost all the participants reported that spirituality is important to their meaningfulness in life. However, one participant reported having lost interest/faith in religion after the incident, which is a negative case analysis, an emerged finding in this study.

Table 11

Objective 2: To Understand Satisfaction with Life among Survivors

Global Theme	Organizing Theme	Basic themes
2. Expectations for a good life	2.1. Readjustment	2.1.1. Livelihood 2.1.2. Good health 2.1.3. Dreams/goals fulfillment 2.1.4. New life 2.1.5. Gratitude

Majority of participants reported not being fully satisfied with their lives and they described what they need to increase their satisfaction with life. First is livelihood, that is food and shelter over their heads. Then they reported that good health for studying and getting a job is crucial for their satisfaction with life. Fulfilling their dreams/goals that for most of them are to get an education and/or professional training and get a job. The new life is more satisfying than the previous one and some participants commemorate the new life after the rescue and are grateful to the people that have rescued them and to the people that are helping them in the reintegration process. These themes as important factors for survivors' meaningfulness of life are emerging research findings. One participant reported that she is not satisfied with her life and that she is only trying to survive and see what the future holds for her. 'Just trying to survive' is another negative case analysis that is also emerging research finding in this study.

Table 12

Objective 3: To Understand the Positive and Negative Emotions among Survivors

Global Theme	Organizing Theme	Basic themes
3. Emotional perspectives of survivor post-rescue	3.1. Gloomy emotions	3.1.1. Sadness 3.1.2. Guilt 3.1.3. Fear 3.1.4. Anger 3.1.5. Loneliness 3.1.6. Frustration
	3.2. Delightful emotions	3.2.1. Happiness 3.2.2. Enjoyment 3.2.3. Hopefulness

As per the findings, participants reported having more negative emotions than positive emotions. Often, they feel sad, guilty, fearful, angry, and lonely, which are emerging research findings. The theme of frustration is supported by Dhungel (2017). Survivors have few positive emotions as they feel happy because they are out of slavery, enjoy a new life, and have hope for a better future, which are also emerging research findings. Hope is a finding contrary to Hu (2011) who reported that hopelessness is a common feeling among survivors of sex trafficking. One participant reported that what she had gone through has contributed to her personal growth. She has a positive

perspective on life. Positivity is another negative case analysis, which emerged in this study.

Table 13

Objective 4: To Understand the Quality of Life among Survivors

Global Theme	Organizing Theme	Basic themes
4. Impact of sex trafficking	4.1. Physical	4.1.1. Headache
		4.1.2. Gastritis
		4.1.3. Cold and fever
	4.2. Psychological	4.2.1. Depression
		4.2.2. Anxiety
		4.2.3. Isolation
		4.2.4. Crying spells
		4.2.5. Fatigue
	4.3. Social	
		4.3.1. Distrust
		4.3.2. Limited social life
	4.4. Environmental	
		4.4.1. Unsafe for girls
		4.4.2. Protection

Physical health problems found in participants in this study were headache (Laura & Wetzel, 2014), gastritis (Oram et al., 2012), cough, and fever, which are emerging research findings that were not present in the a priori. Psychological health symptoms found among them were depression and anxiety (Mumey et al., 2021; Levine, 2017), isolation (Deshpande & Nour, 2013), crying spells (Dhungel, 2017), and fatigue, which is emerging research finding. Participants reported having a limited social life because they distrust almost all people, the environment was found to be unsafe for girls/women, and they cry out for protection. These are emerging research findings which were not present in the a priori. Majority of participants have complaints about their quality of life, but one participant is satisfied with all domains of her life, and for her, the life she has now is a luxurious life (negative case analysis, an emerging finding in this study) because of the facilities the shelter provides for her. This attitude toward life shows that she has overcome the effects of sex trafficking.

Triangulation of the Results

Meaningfulness of life

Survivors rescued within two years scored lower on the meaningfulness of life compared to survivors post two years after the rescue. This is an emerging finding, which shows that sex trafficking had a negative impact on survivors' meaningfulness in life. Participants who had scored low on the MLQ reported during the interview that a life, where there were rape, torture, and abuse, is not a life worth living. A participant revealed during the interview that she was betrayed by an acquaintance who said that he would bring her to the city to live with his sister. She was sold to a brothel instead. She reported, "when I came, I didn't know anything. I was raped… raped… beaten… like that, until they put me into this. I was in hell, it's not life" (ID42, personal communication, March 2, 2022). Likewise, another participant said during the interview, "They beat me up, cigarette touching… burning, electric shock… That's not life (ID25, personal communication, March 3, 2022). Survivors who had high scores revealed that new identity, motherhood, education, acceptance, respect, and spirituality have given their lives meaning.

Satisfaction with life

Survivors rescued within two years have scored lower on satisfaction with life compared to survivors post two years after the rescue. This is an emerging finding, which shows that sex trafficking had a negative impact on survivors' level of satisfaction with life. Participants who had lower scores on the SWLS reported during the interview that livelihood, good health, and goal fulfillment are very important for their satisfaction with life. Participant ID7 reported during the interview that it was because of poverty that she had been sold into sex trafficking and now as a rescued woman, she said "my life could be better if I had more money and more opportunities" (ID7, personal communication, March 3, 2022). Survivors who had high scores revealed that they have a new life and are getting opportunities to fulfill their goals such as getting an education. Participant ID112 reported during the interview that "I'm completing BCom… Fulfill my dreams to get satisfaction in life. When my dreams are fulfilled, I will have higher satisfaction in life" (ID112, personal communication, March 24, 2022).

Emotions

Survivors post two years after the rescue experience more positive emotions and lesser negative emotions compared to survivors rescued within two years. This shows that survivors get better with time. Participants reported having more negative emotions than positive emotions. Often, they feel sad, guilty, fearful, angry, lonely, and frustrated. Women ID29 reported during the interview that "most of the day I feel happy. I am lucky. I am free. If I think about the past, I feel sad. Only when I think about what I did. Now I feel good" (ID29, personal communication, March 2, 2022).

Quality of life

Survivors post two years after the rescue have a better quality of life compared to survivors rescued within two years. This is emerging research finding that reveals that survivors can have a better quality of life when they get appropriate psychological and physical care, and the opportunity to live life with dignity. Physical health problems found in participants were headache, gastritis, cough, and fever. Psychological health symptoms found among them were depression, anxiety, isolation, crying spells, and fatigue. Participants reported having a limited social life because they distrust almost all people. The environment was found to be unsafe for girls and they ask for protection for themselves and all females in the country. Participant ID120 reported during the interview, "I came here to this NGO, that time I was little fine, then I became better… I am protected here" (ID120, personal communication, March 25, 2022).

Chapter 5

Summary and Conclusion

Quantitative Phase

Survivors post two years after the rescue finds life more meaningful and are more satisfied with life compared to survivors rescued within two years. Survivors rescued within two years tend to have lesser positive emotions and more negative emotions compared to survivors post two years after the rescue, and survivors rescued within two years have a lower quality of life compared to survivors post two years after the rescue.

There was a moderate, positive correlation between CMIL and SWL, there was a strong, positive correlation between CMIL and PE, and there was a moderate negative correlation between CMIL and NE, and there was a strong, positive correlation between CMIL and QOL.

Qualitative Phase

Life in slavery was empty and marked by torture and rape. Meaningfulness of life depends on a new identity, motherhood, education, spirituality, and respect. Most participants reported not being fully satisfied with their life but described that livelihood, good health, and fulfillment of their dreams/goals would increase their satisfaction with life. They are grateful to the people that have rescued them and are helping them in the reintegration process.

Limitations of the Study

- The researcher's inability to communicate in Hindi.
- The researcher being a foreigner might have influenced the response of the participants.
- A random sampling technique might give a better representation of this population.
- What predicts meaningfulness of life, satisfaction with life, and quality of life was not possible due to the smaller number of samples. The predictor model is only possible when there are 220 and above samples and this study had only 126.

Implications of the Study

Clinical implications

As the number of years increases after the rescue, life becomes more meaningful to survivors. Thereby, the results of this study can be used as an intervention module for emotional support, building their confidence and their well-being. These aspects could be used initially in the post-rescue stage so that after some time they start finding meaningfulness in life.

Survivors rescued within two years

- Intervention to decrease trauma faster to reintegrate them into society.
- Intervention to increase the meaningfulness of life using positive psychology approaches because there is a relationship between the meaningfulness of life and satisfaction with life and quality of life.

Survivors post two years after the rescue

- Survivors have crossed the trauma stage. Therefore, service providers should work more on the reintegration process increasing their worldview for successful reintegration.

General implications

To educate the general population about the hard life survivors lived and to have a better understanding of their emotions, satisfaction with life, and their overall quality of life.

Scope for Future Research

- Meaningfulness of life increases as the years after rescue increase. Therefore, it can be explored more in-depth with this population. Also, explore the meaningfulness of life with separated age groups.
- Study how meaningfulness of life starts creeping into survivors' lives after being rescued, and what makes them find life more meaningful after the rescue.
- Each theme identified can be used as a sole area of research with survivors of sex trafficking.
- Study the meaningfulness of life with other sectors of human trafficking such as labor, domestic, etcetera, worldwide whether with females, males, adults, or young people.

Conclusion

The findings of this study reveal that sex trafficking had a negative impact on survivors and that they can lead better life when they find what gives meaning to their lives. Psychological health professionals who treat survivors can use positive psychology techniques to help them to find purpose and meaningfulness in life.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Consent to Participate in Research

Exploring the Meaningfulness of Life among Survivors of Sex Trafficking in India

You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Irani Machado da Silva from the Department of Psychology at CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bangalore. The results of this study will be used to fulfill the requirements of a research project/thesis for the degree of Ph.D. Psychology. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are a survivor and hence your contribution would be of immense help.

Purpose of the Study

The present study aims to explore the meaning of life among survivors of sex trafficking in India to help those who provide service to this population to understand them better while treating the trauma they have experienced.

Procedures

If you decide to participate in this study, you will be expected to do the following:

1. Participate in semi-structured interviews. These interviews would require quite a bit of the participant's time. On average, a semi-structured interview can take an hour.

Potential risks and discomforts

There will not be any physiological risks or discomforts.

The interviews will be quite detailed and the areas that the interviews might take the participants could be extremely personal and sometimes the flow of the interview might take the participant to traumatic events from the past. This is a psychological risk that is involved.

In case of the participant feels sad, dull, or depressed due to the interview, (1) they can stop the interview immediately (2) the researcher, being a psychologist will counsel them (3) the researcher will refer them for further counseling by providing contacts.

Potential benefits to participants and/or to society:

The research study can help the participants, as well as the readers, to understand how survivors find meaning in life, the emotions that are predominant, and their overall quality of life. It will give an insight into your own life. This is also aimed at improving services provided to this population to understand them better while treating the trauma they have experienced.

Confidentiality

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission.

The interviews conducted will have to be audio recorded. The participant has the right to edit or delete any portion of the recorded interview. The audio recordings will be erased immediately after the thematic analysis is done.

Participation and withdrawal

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise that warrant doing so.

Rights of research participants

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights, or remedies because you are participating in this research study.

I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

If you need a counselor, please feel free to contact:
Gaiatri Rao (Clinical Psychologist): +91 99018 36536

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact:
Name of the Research Scholar: Irani M. da Silva
Phone: +91-90085 28380
Email ID: irani.dasilva@res.christuniversity.in
Name of the research supervisor: Dr. Anuradha S.
Email ID: anuradha.sathiyaseelan@christuniversity.in
Name of Participant: _____
Signature: _____
Data: _____

APPENDIX B: Socio-Demographic Sheet

Name (Optional): _____

Age: _____

Gender: _____

Education: _____

Language:_____

Occupation: _____

Income: _____

Relationship status: _____

How long have you been staying here? _____

Where are you from? _____

Where do you live now? _____

Current state:

( ) Working

( ) Studying

( ) Other _____

APPENDIX C: Interview Schedule

I. Meaningfulness of life

1. What constitutes a meaningful life?
- Could you elaborate on that?

2. Has your understanding of a meaningful life changed after the incident?
- If so, what led to this change?

3. What do you see as your life's purpose?
- Was it different before the incident?
- How is it different now?

II. Satisfaction with life

1. Could you tell me how satisfied you are with your life?

2. If you could change your life, what would you change to make life better?
- Elaborate more on that.

3. How do you see your life?
- Could you explain it?
- What makes a good life according to your understanding?

III. Positive and negative emotions

"We experience various feelings throughout the day – by feelings I mean the emotions of happiness, sadness, anger, …".

1. Could you tell me how you feel most of the day?
- What emotions do you experience on a typical day?
- In what contexts/scenarios do you experience these emotions?
- Could you give me some examples?

2. What emotions do you experience concerning the past incident/trauma?
- What emotions do you experience concerning your future life (after the trauma)?
- What emotions are you feeling at the moment?

3. What are some ways that you manage/express them on your own?

- What are some ways that you manage/express them with others?
- Who are these people? What is their response?
- Are there other ways you would like to manage these emotions?

4. What other emotions would you like to feel more often in your life that you don't experience now?
- What would help you create those emotions in your life?

IV. Quality of life

Could you tell me about various aspects of your life before the incident and how it has changed?

1. Let's start with your **Health**. Could you tell me about your overall health?
- What was your health like?
- How has it changed after the incident?

2. Could you tell me about your **emotions/psychological** before the incident?
- What was your emotional life like?
- How has it changed after the incident?

3. Tell me about your **social relationships** before the incident.
- What were your **social relationships like**?
- How has it changed after the incident?

4. Could you tell me about your **financial life** before the incident?
- What was your financial life like?
- How has it changed after the incident?

5. Could you tell me about your **spirituality** before the incident?
- What was your spirituality like?
- How has it changed after the incident?

6. Could you tell me about your **occupation** before the incident?
- What was your occupation like?
- How has it changed after the incident?

APPENDIX D: IRB Approval Letter

CENTRE FOR RESEARCH

CU:RCEC/00099/12/19 18 DECEMBER 2019

Ms. IRANI MACHADO DA SILVA
Reg No. :1850088,
Department of PSYCHOLOGY
CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bengaluru

Sub: Ethical Approval of the Study Titled "Exploring Meaningfulness of Life among Survivors of Sex Trafficking in India".

The Institutional Ethics committee has reviewed your application for ethical clearance for the Study titled "Exploring Meaningfulness of Life among Survivors of Sex Trafficking in India".

The committee has cleared your proposal for data collection after assessing the ethical aspects.

Sincerely,

T.S.Sam

Dr Tony Sam George
(Member Secretary to Ethics Committee)
Additional Director
Center for Research
CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bengaluru

APPENDIX E: Conference Presentation

Da Silva, I. M. & Sathiyaseelan, A. (2022). *Meaning in Life - a comparative Study between survivors of sex trafficking and the females from the general public.* The 57th National and 26th International Conference, Organized by the Indian Academy of Applied Psychology (IAAP) Jointly with the Department of Clinical Psychology, Mizoram University, held on 27th to 29th January 2022.

57th NATIONAL & 26th INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
OF
INDIAN ACADEMY OF APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY (IAAP)
Virtual conference
Relevance of psychology in pandemic condition & it's impact on well-being in the digital world.

Certificate of Participation

This Certificate is awarded to

Dr/Mr/Mrs/Ms Irani Machado da Silva

For presenting paper, titled - Meaning in Life - a comparative Study between survivors of sex trafficking and the females from the general public.

Co-authored by Anuradha Sathiyaseelan

in the 57th National & 26th International Conference
of the Indian Academy of Applied Psychology (RCI - Accredited), organised jointly by
the Department of Clinical Psychology and Department of Psychology, Mizoram University,
from 27th January to 29th January, 2022.

Prof MVR Raju
President
IAAP

Dr. Surendran Veeraiah
Secretary
IAAP

Dr. Thiyam Kiran Singh
Organising Chairperson

Dr. Laxmi Narayan Rathore
Organising Secretary

Rehabilitation Council of India

Da Silva, I. M. & Sathiyaseelan, A. (2021). *Psychological interventions for female survivors of sex trafficking.* In the 47th National Annual Conference, Organized by the Indian Association of Clinical Psychologists, held on 28th to 30 May 2021.

भारतीय पुनर्वास परिषद

47th NATIONAL ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF INDIAN ASSOCIATION OF CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGISTS

(47th NACIACP 2021)

28-30 May 2021, AFMC Pune

VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

Digital Interventions, Challenges and Perspectives: Newer Frontiers in Clinical Psychology

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that

Irani M. da Silva

presented a poster at the 47th NACIACP 2021 virtual conference held from 28-30 May 2021.

Title:

Psychological interventions for female survivors of sex trafficking

Co-authored by:
Anuradha Sathiyaseelan

Dr Kalpana Srivastava
President, IACP
Organizing Chairperson,
47 NACIACP - 2021

Dr N. Suresh Kumar
Organizing Secretary
CRE- Coordinator
47 NACIACP-2021

Dr Manoj K. Bajaj
Hon. General Secretary,
IACP

Da Silva, I. M. & Sathiyaseelan, A. (2021). *Resilience and Sex Trafficking Survivors: A Systematic Literature Review.* Trends in Psychology Summit, Organized by the Department of Psychology at Harvard University, held on 12 November 2021.

Presented by Harvard University's Women in Psychology

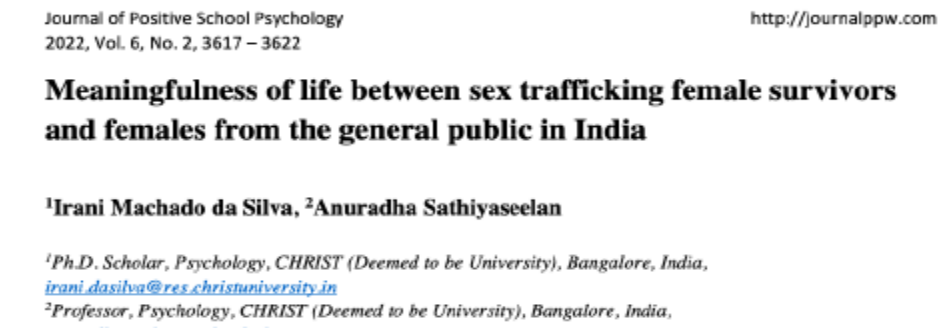
Trends in Psychology Summit

November 12, 2021

Kelsey Keen	Can Child-Directed Interaction Improve Social Communication Skills? A Comparison between Children with and without Autism Spectrum Disorder	B-17
Veronika Kobrinsky	Mediators of the Relationship Between Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Psychopathological Symptoms in a Non-Clinical Adult Sample	B-18
Parneet Kaur	Stress and the Stomach: A Cognitive Perspective	B-19
Lauren Elizabeth Thomas	Using Ecological Momentary Assessment to Understand the Links between Affective Dynamics and Psychopathology	B-20
Amber Stuedell	So Mush Room to Grow: Efficacy of Psilocybin-Assisted Psychotherapy to Treat Anorexia Nervosa by Increasing Psychological Flexibility	B-21
Daniel Inwood	Colorism and Microaggressions: Associations Between Discriminatory Experiences and Academic/Well-Being Outcomes for Minority College Students	B-22
Miranda Bridgwater	Development and Feasibility Study of the Mental Health Care Utilization Questionnaire (MHCU-Q)	B-23
Sarah Lynch	Locus of Control, Stress, and Aggression in an Incarcerated Population	B-24
Michele Lim	Anxiety, stress, and binge eating tendencies in adolescence: a prospective approach	B-25
Irani Machado da Silva	Resilience and Sex Trafficking Survivors – A Systematic Literature Review	B-26

APPENDIX F: Publications

Da Silva, I. M. & Sathiyaseelan, A. (2022). Meaningfulness of life between sex trafficking female survivors and females from the general public in India. *Journal of Positive School Psychology. Vol. 6, No. 2, 3617–3622.* https://journalppw.com/index.php/jpsp/article/view/2376/1487



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Meaningfulness of life between sex trafficking female survivors and females from the general public in India

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Da Silva, I. M., & Sathiyaseelan, A.,| Luca Cerniglia (Reviewing editor) (2019). Emotional needs of women post-rescue from sex trafficking in India. *Cogent Psychology*, 6:1, DOI: 10.1080/23311908.2019.1631584

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cogent psychology

CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY & NEUROPSYCHOLOGY | RESEARCH ARTICLE

Emotional needs of women post-rescue from sex trafficking in India

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Da Silva, I. M., & Sathiyaseelan, A., (2019). Emotional Experience of Women Post-Rescue From Sex Trafficking in India, *The Journal of Social Sciences Research, Academic Research Publishing Group*, vol. 5(12), pages 1681-1690, 12-2019.

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